

## The Sun.

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## Reforming the Navy.

Critics of our naval establishment are numerous and more or less inaccurate. It is not true, for example, that we are absolutely wasting forty millions a year in our navy yards, and yet it is so nearly true that we may well take alarm. Undoubtedly we are throwing away several millions a year, and undoubtedly this prodigious leak should be arrested.

We have too many navy yards that represent nothing in particular but politics. Among these is the Kittery Point establishment, known officially as the Portsmouth station. Long ago, in the days of wooden ships, Portsmouth was famous. It had the best woodworkers in the country and turned out the very finest products. In this age of iron it is next door to worthless. Certainly it is extravagantly expensive. There are no iron works within easy reach, and if skilled mechanics and artisans are needed they must be imported for the occasion. Moreover, the channels and approaches are narrow, cursed by appalling currents, while the space for anchorage is limited in area and almost destitute of "holding ground." Three warships have been assigned to Portsmouth for repairs and overhauling after their long voyage. Let us hope they may enter and depart in safety and that the workmen and material assembled for them may not cost too much.

Much to the same effect, if based on different grounds, may be said of Charleston, Pensacola, New Orleans and San Francisco. Pensacola now has an abundance of water, which cannot be said of the other navy yards mentioned, but Pensacola is singularly open to bombardment by an enemy, as indeed is Portsmouth. The truth is that we have at present only four naval establishments which can be safely relied upon in case of stress and where the Government can profitably increase its expenditures for maintenance and improvement—Boston, New York, Hampton Roads, and Bremerton, in the State of Washington. Our warships are rapidly increasing in size, and the difficulty of keeping pace with that increase grows more formidable and more costly in respect of such ports as Charleston, New Orleans and San Francisco. We can well afford to multiply our equipment of docks and shops in the one case, and notwithstanding the outlay that has been made in the others we shall be wise to abandon them to the use of the light draught cruisers, torpedo boats, etc., if we do not relinquish them altogether.

The great waste of energy and money on land, to which attention has already been called; the subordination of military to civilian and merely political considerations, and the general confusion and futility that have so long prevailed in our navy yards, may now be regarded as in a fair way of abolition. Concurrently with the scheme of reorganization which has been set on foot by the Roosevelt commission, the Secretary of the Navy has ordered a consolidation of the machinery within the yards, and by placing the new arrangement under the authority of line officers has paved the way finally for a termination of the conflict, the friction and the wastefulness that have hitherto prevailed. All we need now is an extension of the spirit of this reform to the whole structure of the navy, a subjection of all its functions to military supervision and authority, and a definite relegation of the landsmen to their proper place in the system.

## The Refuge at Point Judith.

The disaster to the Republic suggests the desirability of an extension of the refuge station at Point Judith. In this particular instance the station was of no special service. In other and always possible events it might be of immeasurable value. Had the immediate landing of the passengers of the Republic and the Florida been a necessity arising out of the disabled condition of both vessels, a situation easily conceivable, the harbor of Newport might have been the alternative of beaching the ship. Newport is fifteen miles up Narragansett Bay, and the Point Judith harbor of refuge is at the entrance to the bay. Between running up to a wharf behind the breakwater at the point and following a harbor channel through fifteen miles of fog up to the Newport landing the advantage is certainly on the side of the former.

That immediate neighborhood is one of the worst places on our coast, and the highway running through it and the route running past it are the scenes of an enormous traffic, both freight and passenger. The great ocean ships swing past it, outside of Nantucket, and the huge South Sea steamers and scores of smaller craft ply its waters daily. The value of the work already done at Point Judith is shown in the fact that

during the last five years 4,805 vessels, schooners, steamers, barges, sloops and other craft, have sought shelter and have found it behind the breakwater. In 1905 it was a refuge for 807 vessels, and in 1908 for 1,677. The record for 1908 shows only one wreck in the vicinity, a three masted schooner that went ashore on the Handkerchief Shoals. The records show the passing of 22,000 vessels a year, out of which last year 8 per cent. sought shelter behind the breakwater.

A considerable sum has already been expended on the place, but the results have more than justified the expenditure. About \$300,000 is now wanted for the construction of a landing wharf. No less desirable than the wharf is a larger equipment of the life saving station. A wireless telegraph plant should be provided, and stoutly built seagoing motorboats should be located there.

The value of such an equipment in time of need, an ever present possibility in that region, is not measurable in dollars. It is a question of lives rather than of property.

## The New Building Code.

It is understood that the draft code prepared by the Building Code Revision Commission will be reported to the Board of Aldermen early next month. No part of the draft has been made known officially, beyond certain provisions relating to the height of buildings. These were submitted to a public hearing last November and proved to be of a drastic nature. Among them was a requirement that all mercantile buildings and factories hereafter erected shall be of fireproof construction if exceeding five stories in height. It was opposed on the ground that most of the business of this town is housed in slow burning as opposed to fireproof buildings, and that to reduce the height allowed in semi-fireproof business constructions from seven stories to five would drive a large part of our wholesale trade and manufacturing to the competitive New Jersey railway centres across the Hudson.

The commission declines to say what action it has taken on the provisions discussed at the hearing. However, there is reason to believe that these are to be retained and that in addition the draft code will restrict semi-fireproof apartment houses to five stories. The present limit of height for apartment houses of this sort as fixed by the tenement house act is six stories. There is doubt whether the Board of Aldermen has authority to prohibit a form of construction allowed under the tenement house act, which is a State law; but apart from the litigation which such a prohibition would involve the proposal to abolish the six story semi-fireproof apartment building is vicious.

The distinctive feature of apartment houses is that they furnish elevator service. They are of two kinds—the semi-fireproof house, invariably of six stories, and the fireproof house, usually of twelve stories. The former is the only dwelling of moderate rent now being constructed that provides elevator service. Houses of this type are projected in The Bronx to rent at \$7 a room a month. The average rent of fireproof apartments is \$12 to \$15.

The fire protection and sanitary standards of the six story semi-fireproof apartment building, whereof the construction is regulated by the tenement house act, are of an exceptionally high order. To abolish this type of building would put an end to the production of moderate priced apartments and leave the "walkup" flat as the exclusive middle class family dwelling—a dwelling which is held responsible by physicians for a large part of the growing mortality from cardiac diseases.

## Footlights for Society.

Indubitably we are as a nation fond of the footlights. This does not imply that we are devoted alone to the theatre; it means that in August as well as in New York, in Chicago, likewise in Boston, the tendency to dramatize our daily attitudes and gestures, to get into the central refuge of the limelight, is an unmistakable symptom. Publicity is the limelight. Your name in a newspaper is publicity. Time was when to be mentioned, whether as a hero or a murderer, a performing artist or an embezzler, was sufficient to such exalted status. But the trump of fame has learned to sound other if more mediocre music. The scale may be minor, yet it is none the less construed in the mode major. After the White House the playhouse; after the playhouse the hotel. Society has set its affirming seal upon the now almost universal custom of relating for a curious world the menus and "those present" at any one of our fashionable hostesses the morning after in the columns of the daily newspaper. It began—not to go back too many years—in London. Its function then was to enumerate the names of guests at court receptions, balls and routs. Then we improved on the practice. Persons of importance were mentioned as having been witnesses of such and such a play. And now if a tableful at a well known restaurant eat quail with the accompanying bottle the fact is sedulously recorded in print. Alas! poor Hamlet. He objected to the booming of cannon at the King's wassail. What would the Prince of Denmark not say if on venturing back to the glimpses of the electric lamps he should discover that the custom was still more honored in the breach than in the observance; that the Duke of Olivo and the glorious procession of sturdy democrats lined up or supped to the sounds of drums and trumpets, and that this sweet concert of food and melody was made the subject of tall headlines.

The hotel and not the home seems to be the social unit in New York city. Our hotels have press agents. You may check the baby's dolls within their comprehensive walls. More, you may order elephants or fresh snakes and they will be forthcoming. Your modern hotel is your true Ali Baba's cave. Repeat the magic formula, wave a check book, and it's open sesame all the year round. Dis-

gestion waits on good reporters. Eat fresh asparagus in January or game out of season and you are a social event. Savor himself in all the plenitude of his culinary genius did not dream that the pleasures of the table would one day take social precedence over such trifles as birth or brains. Vatel would never have slain his mortal body if he could have foreseen the time when a new salad was of more importance than a treaty. There is nothing new under the sun, say the wiseacres. Fudge! Not Lucullian banquets were so novel as the practice of setting up in type the solemn fact that some fat citizen has partaken of strawberries glazed at an honorable abode of epicures. And what a picture it would make for THACKERAY—THACKERAY who joyed nightly when describing the evolutions of a stout alderman as he endeavors to pour full his interior with turtle soup.

But turn we—as our clerical friends put it—turn we to the obverse of the medal: What's good for the goose should be good for the gander; what's done on the West could be easily imitated on the East Side. So dramatic have become the habits of our well to do folks when eating, drinking at eventide that nothing is lacking to complete the illusion but a set of footlights around each seated group. When, for instance, the hotel bandmaster waves his wand let the foot as well as the border lights be turned up at each table. All hotels would at once follow suit. Also would the ladies, conscious of their more theatrical pose, of the inevitable *opérette du théâtre* "make up" accordingly. The results could not fail to be fascinating. Think of such practices when transposed to the last Side; of the delightful reunions at Georgian Hall or at the Panhandlers Union. Think of the increased social responsibilities, with the consequent added dignity and beauty of social life if every Jack and every Jill saw in resounding type the day after that he and she had swallowed two stew and later copious draughts of beer.

What settlement worker could fight such forces? What chance would invidious socialism have against such snobbish odds? By all means, if we wish to play fair in the great good game, let us hear of society's doings from Hester street as well as from the Avenue. Perhaps the lion and the lamb—not to include the green peas—may meet over the mahogany some day and without the persuasive words of Brer Fox, the eternal socialist.

## A Glimpse Down Along the Line of the Barge Canal.

The report of the State Superintendent of Public Works shows two things of considerable public interest; that is, of interest to the taxpayers whose money is being shovelled into the insatiable ditch.

The first thing is that however fast the people's dollars are disappearing, the actual physical progress on the barge canal is so slow that the completion of the work anywhere near the contract time is exceedingly unlikely. The process of shovelling in the money promises as to go on indefinitely. In comparison the probable date of the completion of the Panama Canal, whether high level or sea level, is an event of to-morrow, and the advent of the Greek kalends seems like an affair of day after to-morrow.

The second fact of general concern disclosed by Mr. STEVENS is that while the date of the probable completion of the work is receding into the dim vistas of a problematical future, the statistics of the present canal system of the State are showing a remarkable decrease of traffic. Last year the loss of business was actually three hundred thousand tons. That is to say, the canal traffic—whether from the malign influence of boatmen's unions, as Mr. STEVENS surmises, or for some other reason which Mr. STEVENS's philosophy has not yet grasped—has begun to melt away at the rate of 10 per cent. or more a year.

How much traffic will be left for the barge canal when the last dollar of the hundreds of millions has been shovelled in and the ditch is open for business? Superintendent STEVENS thinks the barge canal law ought to be amended. So do we. It ought to be amended out of existence before many more millions have been wasted.

That is the only sort of amendment tolerable to common sense and common honesty.

## The S. S. B.

There are times when even the best of us must be sorry that the Hon. ANDREW CARNEGIE isn't either poorer or less of a friend of humanity. Here is the twenty-second circular of the Simplified Spelling Board. Twenty-two circulars already and thousands more to come, and all to show that Mr. CARNEGIE's individualistic or eccentric way of spelling are not mere accidents of calligraphy but that men almost as great if not better have been no better spellers than Skibo's bonny Thane. This latest apology for his spelling drags SAMUEL ADAMS, "the great Puritan statesman," into the limbo of calligraphers. He wrote "armd," "burnd," "heald" and so on. What of it? Is it for his spelling that SAM ADAMS is famous? Are the schoolmasters to follow his example? If the world has improved, spelling improved with it. It is no kindly act to lay bare the nakedness of Mr. ADAMS or GEORGE WASHINGTON or any other earlier worthy's spelling. They spelled the best they knew how. The simplifiers spell the worst they know how, thereby hoping, as becomes grateful men, to equal the performances of their beneficent patron.

JOHN MILTON was a perverse speller. We are not called upon to follow him in his freaks of calligraphy any more than in his theory and practice of the domestic relations. What is the use of piling up great names or friendly names, SHAKESPEARE, BEN JONSON, SIDNEY, SPENSER, HOWELL, COTGRAVE? Admit that there has been an intolerable deal of crazy spelling since there was English to spell. In this more fortunate age, and after at least a few of us have lived laborious days and known, if we belong to the lost antique

world, the ferule, the foolscap, the dark closet, and won English spelling as she is spelled, she chose to come again and all to be mixed and made over? "Since the petrification of spelling under recent publishers," from about 1850," cries circular No. 22, the voice being presumably that of the indefatigable J. B. MATTHEWS. Any settled and standard forms of spelling are "petrified." Throw these down and set up some fresher and half baked models.

Now the old fashions are good enough for us, but the matter doesn't amount to much one way or the other. "Observe," and indeed it cannot but be "notist," the "neat and succinct appearance of the simplified forms of the words in ed as reduced to simple d, with the reduction in many cases of the doubled consonant preceding."

Nabd, rld, sbd, bagd, enced, whild, napt, ript, sbt, bct, crest, stld, elud, dld, kild, mnd, grieved, enced, clld, dld, kild, mnd, grieved.

These "bd's" and "gd's" are particularly engaging. They make English look like something between Arabic and early Carthaginian. If publishers were not so petrified, books, and especially story and poetry books, could be made to blossom like the rose. But how can a reform be brought about by faint hearted reformers? "The board has not undertaken to decide" whether "dwell," "speld," "spild," "spold," or "dweld," "spelt," "spilt" and so forth "is to be preferred." Both forms are "correct." This, however, is not "positively" enough. And let us have uniformity. Thus: "It is a favorite practice of a vindictive executiv to delv by means of a detctive into the breast of his dasht foe—may they be burned and hanged until they are ded!" Consistency is somewhat of a jewel even in simplification; and if the old spelling is cracked or mad, substitutes that appear ought to be rational throughout.

The owners of the elevated and subway railroads should engage the Hon. ROSS A. FRY as chief of police for the control of rowdy patrons of their lines.

The enterprising and scientific citizens of Ventnor City, N. J., erected jetties on the ocean front to induce the waves to beat the land for them. This sea beat, but it failed to induce the waves to beat the beach already occupied. It is difficult to get something for nothing, even from the sea.

Never does knowledge of the presence of leprosy in a resident of the North Atlantic coast State become public without directing attention to the senseless, panic bred by this disease among the non-medical and the health authorities. At present Philadelphia has a case and the family of the victim, "without a home and the father unable to obtain employment," is described, with admirable restraint, as being "in a sorry plight." Only a short time ago a leper was being hunted like a wild beast in West Virginia, and the unhappy condition of a discharged United States soldier suffering from the disease recently called forth much comment. A proper institution for the treatment of the afflicted and popular education as to the real nature of leprosy are sadly needed wherever the malady is uncommon.

It is a great pity that the alleged "destruction" of the Spring Hill College near Mobile has gone abroad through the instrumentality of the newspapers. This institution is one of the most venerable and useful of the educational establishments in the country, and as a matter of fact the fire was of small extent and did not really interrupt the course of affairs at all. The building, however, is the catalogue. It has contributed vastly to the learning and the morality of the age. It has not been "destroyed." It was not even seriously crippled.

Admiral ROWLEY D. EVANS, assuming that Russia will not endure her humiliation by Japan, predicts another and a greater war. "There will be a fight worth seeing," he says. He hopes that his choice will win, but firmly declines to reveal it. As an officer of the active fleet Admiral EVANS is not retiring.

The reelection of the Hon. ISAAC STEPHENSON, renominated for Senator in Congress from Wisconsin by popular primaries, is vainly opposed by certain lunatics and reactionaries. They assert that he spent between \$100,000 and \$250,000 in getting the people to vote for him. It was common report that Uncle ISAAC was a liberal spender and that the heart of the people had to be cheered by a liberal hand. But those stories, even if true, should be dismissed as calumnies invented and uttered by the enemies of "popular" primaries and direct nominations. No corruption is possible under the new system; or if it is possible and actual, consider how much easier it is for the buyer than the old system. Let this at least be said in favor of the new way: It is convenient for the statesman with the price.

## Making a Hero.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—Sir: It was inevitable that the public should select one man among the many who did their duty in the rambling and the fire at the Florida. For his praise and commendation, but why Binnas? Binnas was the one man on the ship who was constantly in communication with her officers and with the shore stations and the rescuing ships; his vital work he had no desire, weary, tired, inspiring words of illness, no time to listen to gloomy prognostications or dismal recitals of past disasters. True, he went hungry, grew cold, cramped, tired, but he was not unique in this. He had his responsibility, but so did captain, mates, petty officers, deckhands, engineers and all the others.

Does he deserve laudation such as is received in the House of Representatives above, say, the stewards and stewardesses who, standing at their stations in the icy dark corridors, directed the passengers to safety, not knowing at what moment the ship might sink? Or above the men and women passengers who, cold and bewildered, restrained for hours their natural fears, augmented by their ignorance of the perils that surrounded them?

I would not deprive any man of his just measure of reward, but the excellent Binnas seems to me to be not the most deserving of the ships' company that acted so worthily in the latest tragedy of the high seas.

B. R. L.

## Mr. Bok's Despair.

From the *Littell's Home Journal*.  
 Inquiry: To the best of my knowledge there is no exercise that would benefit a condition of bow legs in a girl of seventeen.

## Discharging Cargo.

The whale groaner.  
 "It's perfectly all right," he cried. "That fellow is tapping on C O D signals."  
 Herewith he decided to eject Josiah.

## ART NOTES.

The only current exhibition of oils that is of significance this week—meaning of course new work—is that of a dozen or so Paul Cornoyers at the Powell Gallery, Sixth Avenue between Fifty-fifth and Fifty-sixth streets. This artist is quietly pursuing his own way, not bothering with either academic or revolutionary movements. He seems to act as if he had come into the world only to paint good pictures, and he does paint them; paints them in a modest manner and generally with a charming touch. His vision, always keen, does not always particularly distinguished, is gaining in fitness and precision with each season, and his brushwork, too often heavy and unilluminative, is becoming lighter, more varied and vivid. His palette, too, is richer. That little canvas "In the Bronx" is much warmer than some earlier Cornoyers, and the sun dappled wall of the old farmhouse reveals a mastery of light problems. A large moonlight scene on Prince Edward Island, full of dark blues, translucent, not pasty after the jube manner of the tonalists, is a very effective treatment of contrasted lamp light and moonlight. There is quite a nocturnal feeling. Several of the pictures now at Powell's have been seen before. The majority were recently painted.

"Washington Square After Rain" is very attractive; so is the "Early Morning on Fifty-fifth Street." This canvas we described last year. It has been worked over with excellent results. You see the "familiar" and "familiar" houses. The familiar vision is transfigured by the play of light and atmosphere. You ask your- self—Paris? No, the buildings are too tall. Is New York then a beautiful city, despite the old fashioned grubbiness that hates any beauty but that of the Middle Ages? New York interpreted as Whistler interpreted certain aspects of London may furnish for our grandchildren a new aesthetic pleasure. (But why the boat?) It is precisely the function of art to extract blood from turnips. Again Mr. Cornoyer's "Columbus Circle" is a discovery. The spot is positively picturesque in a modern fashion. "Madison Square Under Snow" yields an agreeable note. The painter is still faithful to his Mores, but Mores, like Katwyk, could be banished from art for a century at least. The "familiar" subjects are hopelessly banal. Back to Camden, N. J., or to the mysterious regions of small soap factories, unwholesome exhalations and hideous noises which lie adjacent to and impinge upon that carnivalesque spot Long Island City.

The Cornoyer exhibition only lasts this week. It is welcome in this most inopportune season. A number of little shows are dotted over the territory ranging from Twenty-eighth to Fortieth street. Henry Plympton Spaulding has thirty water colors at Klackner's, 7 West Twenty-eighth street. They are clever, not particularly brilliant, withal honest in execution. Mr. Spaulding at least is not a trickster like many of the watercolor school. He respects his medium. He sees, if not novel things around Venice (poorly by the sea, like an old couple painted to death), picturesque bits. His watercolors are more deeply felt than his dry land and coasts, though that "Garden at Rappallo" is well worth while. "The Back Lagoon" has a delicate charm, and "The Fish Wharf" and "Harbor of Gloucester" are capital.

The miniature painters are come to town. It is their annual exhibition and they are at Knoedler's, in the rear gallery, downstairs. They make a brave showing of how to execute frescoes within the compass of a few inches of ivory. Ruskin would tear out his hair if he could return from Wallahia and drop into Knoedler's. (The Fuchs portraits are upstairs, too.) There is of course some exquisite work well within the limitations imposed by the art. Many familiar names are on the catalogue. The portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Aldrich by Lucia Fairchild Fuller were seen at the last Academy, which seems a good idea. We liked Percy MacKaye's head by Carlota Saint Gaudens—but summer is coming on apace, and miniature painting is trying to the eyes. Let us hasten to Bonaventures', thence to Macbeth's.

At the former gallery, 5 East Thirty-fifth street, there are paintings by Edward Land Morse, which betray his German training, and his predilection for muddy coloring. He has talent, nevertheless, but he needs must go into the sunshine and escape the Teutonic cellar school. William Fuller Curtis is of a decorative bent. That "Spinster" of his with its early Florentine and modern poster mixture is captivating. She is the ideal old maid. His peacock, turkey gobblers and fish are highly ornamental. His black and whites are not noteworthy.

At Macbeth's Henry W. Ranger shows fifteen pictures of the accustomed Ranger sort. They are pleasing to the eye of a certain public and display manual dexterity. "Sunrise at Noank" contains hints of Turner's handling of perspective and light and hot sunlit; that is, Turner overladen by Godfrey Bunce. Mr. Ranger is an artist of serious aims and a favorite with those who revel in the "tonal." The Berlin Photographic Company announces that it has reproductions in black and white and brown of the German pictures at the Metropolitan Museum; not all of them, but the best. We can recommend these reproductions as being far more satisfactory than the originals—with a few exceptions, Lenbach, Menzel, etc.—for the ugly color surfaces are not present in the prints, while all the vigor of line and composition is present. At the National Arts Club, East Nineteenth street, there will be held beginning February 3 an international exhibition of pictorial photography, upon a scale that will warm the cockles of the hearts of the "art" people. Julius Oehme happily calls certain paintings at his gallery (northwest corner Fifth Avenue and Thirty-second street) "friends for life." These particular friends are Diaz, Daubigny, Corot, Harpignies, Dupré, Lhermitte, Dielerle, Cazin, Henner, Ziem, Troyon, Rousseau, Thaulow, Boudin, Rico, Mauve, Jongkind and the younger Dutchmen. These examples need no special recommendation from an expert. They are first class. Mr. Oehme has for those who like a pretty or brilliant canvas a picture by Dagman Bouveret, a painter who might have become a master instead of the "best seller" which he is nowadays.

The Swimming Apples.  
 TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—Do the people of the United States realize that the population of the State of California is less than that of Manhattan Island?

Now we apply swim.

New York, January 26.

Mystery of Victim.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—Why is it that the few people still remaining honest in this country are all engaged in writing for the magazines?

G. F. F.

New York, January 26.

## MR. TAFT AND THE PERMANENT TARIFF COMMISSION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—Sir: In his letter to Mr. Rosenberg Mr. Taft has declared in more or less specific terms his endorsement of the plan to create a permanent tariff commission. In his letter to Senator Payne Mr. Taft now defines his ideas of what such a commission should be in its advisory capacity. The movement for the organization of such a body already has a considerable force, and its activity a few months hence will depend in no small degree upon the attitude of Mr. Taft as President. The issue may form a third feature of importance in the discussion, the two others being the adjustment of individual schedules and the question of adopting maximum and minimum rates. Should Mr. Taft become active in the effort to create a commission that issue might overshadow the others.

The plan is not new. Two bills proposing such a commission were introduced in the Senate last winter, and one has already been introduced in the House during the present session. The La Follette bill, introduced on March 20, 1908, called for a commission of nine members appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. It provided for an elaborate and perhaps impossible system of selection and service, and proposed a compensation of \$10,000 a year. The bill was referred to the Finance Committee of the Senate and has not yet emerged from the spacious pigeonholes controlled by that body. Mr. La Follette may possibly secure a committee report on his bill, but it is a safe guess that the report would be unfavorable.

On January 7, 1908, Mr. Beveridge presented his plan (Senate bill 3183). On February 5 he addressed the Senate in support of his bill. Perhaps the most important part of his speech was a series of resolutions passed by various trade associations throughout the country indicating the widespread support of the plan. In the order of their importance, the leader on this list was the National Association of Manufacturers, with a membership of three thousand firms. This association advocated "the immediate creation of a non-partisan permanent tariff commission for the following purposes and ends, through Congressional action:

"First, the intelligent, thorough and unprejudiced study of facts.

"Secondly, the development and enlargement of our foreign trade.

"Thirdly, the accomplishment of this by reciprocal trade agreements, based on maximum and minimum schedules.

"Fourthly, the adjustment of the tariff schedules so that they shall affect all interests favorably and equitably, without excessive or needless protection to any."

In the collection there were resolutions by associations representing various industries—live stock, meat packing, carriage building, hardware, milling, piano making, boots and shoes—as well as resolutions by boards of trade and chambers of commerce. The interest indicated by these communications points to the probability of an active campaign when Congress shall have assembled for the purpose of discussing the tariff. It is proposed that a convention be held about the middle of next month for the purpose of inaugurating such a campaign, and the approval of Mr. Taft, as recently made public, is regarded as the one thing needed to give life and energy to the movement.

That our way of making tariffs is utterly unscientific must be admitted, as must the fact that the results of our work are woefully destitute of that fair and just proportion which should be the chief characteristic of so important a matter.

The present need of revision is due to the fact of inequality in the effect of which is detrimental to the economic interests of the country. When Germany some years ago undertook the work of revising its tariff a commission of thirty members was appointed and several years devoted to careful study and classification and adjustment. From the American point of view such a system seems overelaborate and even cumbersome, but there may well be a distinct advantage for us in a modification of it.

It now seems probable that a vigorous effort will be made to create a body whose business it shall be to furnish Congress with facts and figures more reliable than those obtainable by the means now employed.

SCIENTIFIC REVISION.

WASHINGTON, January 26.

## A Friend of the South.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—Sir: When the bullet of the assassin late Abraham Lincoln loosed the South lost a true friend, one who united a kindly nature with a judicial mind, one who had the patience of a far seeing man.

After him came many Republican Presidents, but never one who will stand conspicuous as being a self-contained friend of the South. There were those who had Lincoln's kindliness, those who had his force, those who had his judicial frame of mind, but never one with his large patience and his gift for seeing into the future.

It is too much to say that when William Howard Taft stood for the Presidency the South will have a friend who is a great Judge, a great seer, a great statesman, and a most human and lovable man withal?

CHARLES BATTIE LOMIS.

LEONIA, N. J., January 25.

The Silver Dollar That Washington Threw.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—Sir: Mr. A. W. Brown asks in the *Washington Post* why Washington threw the silver dollar across the Potomac in Delaware. You reply: "The river was the Potomac, at that spot not expressly designated. It is one of the stories of Washington myth which rests upon the guletism of Faxon Weems."

For once THE SUN is in error. The story is not mythical. Washington did throw a silver dollar across a river, a wide river, the Rappahannock, not the Potomac. I have seen the very place, also the river. The place is near the steamboat wharf at Fredericksburg. The river is there a third of a mile wide.

CUMBERLAND, Md., January 25.

A Custom of the Sea.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—Sir: Why did that brave man Captain Seabury of the Republic consider it necessary to risk his life by remaining on board his ship after everybody else had safely fled and his presence there could not aid in keeping her afloat? Was not his life worth more than deference to antique custom?

BROOKLYN, January 26.

## The Republic.

It is stirring to read  
 Of the sinking of the brave,  
 Of the captain who stayed  
 'Till she sunk "neath the wave."

It is splendid to hear  
 Of the disciplined crew,  
 Each one calm at his post,  
 Every man tried and true.

It is thrilling to read  
 Of the man who stood fast,  
 Sending summons through air  
 From his magical mast.

High our hearts beat with pride  
 For the heroic boat  
 Streaming quick to her aid  
 From the sea and the coast.

And this is the truth  
 That is borne in on me:  
 We don't find any boys  
 In the strength of the sea.

McLAREN'S VERDICT.

## POE'S BIRTHPLACE.

Three Cities, Baltimore, Boston and Norfolk, Contend for the Honor.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—Sir: I have been asked to write for the *Post* an article in the February number of the *Commonwealth Magazine* by Elizabeth Elliott Poe, said to be a member of the poet's family. She says:

"A house in Norfolk, Va., is shown as his birthplace. Bostonians have shown him with emphasis that he was born in the Hub, but as a matter of fact Maryland, not Massachusetts or Virginia, justly claims the weird singer of the night as her own. To Baltimore belongs the right to call him son."

Then she says that Poe was born January